

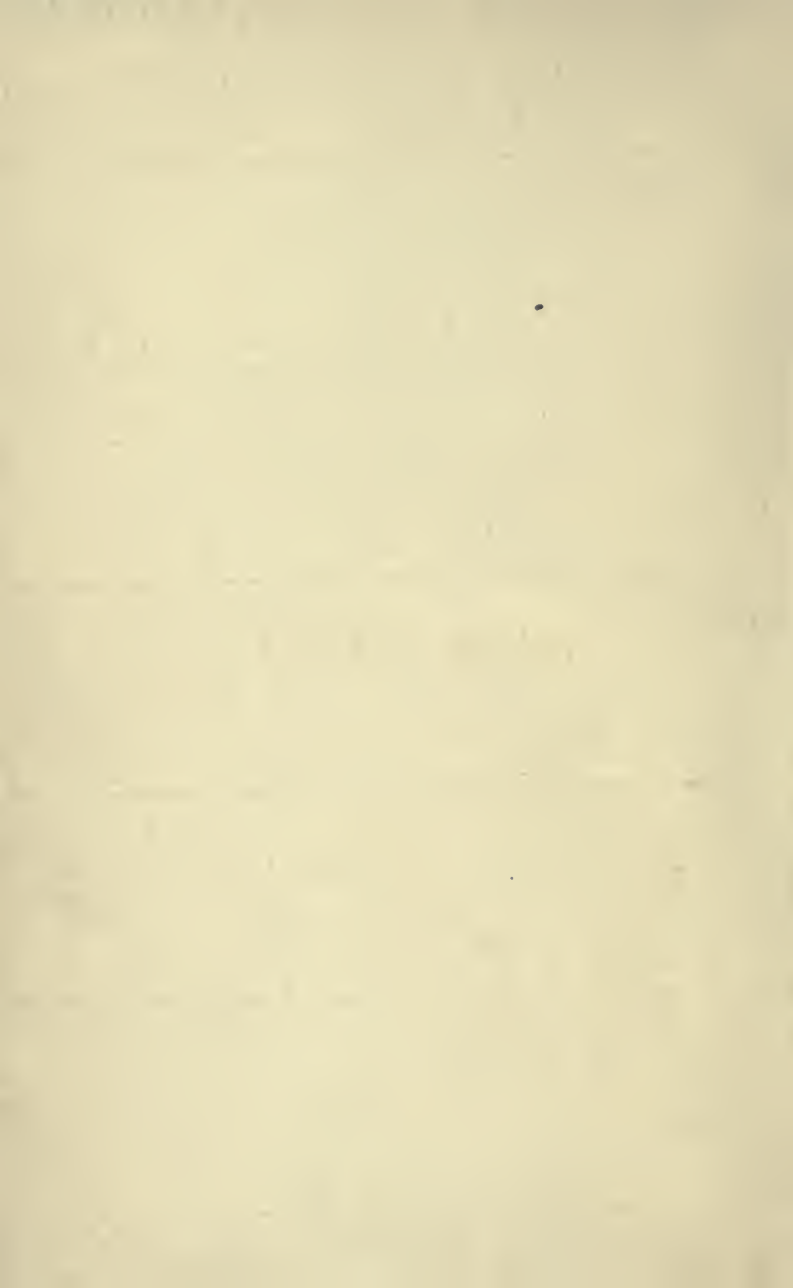
ANIMA CHRISTI.











ANIMA CHRISTI





# ANIMA CHRISTI

*Joseph Smith* BY  
J. S. FLETCHER

BRADFORD :  
J. S. FLETCHER & CO. '9 NEW INN BUILDINGS  
THORNTON ROAD

1884

LIBRARY AMPLA

PR  
6011  
L5  
A5

LIBRARY

*O Soul of Christ Whom, seeing not, we know,  
O Mighty Influence working by strange ways  
Unto the destined end, be Thine the praise  
That any soul is brought from endless woe,  
From suffering and the life which is below  
Unto the searching presence of the blaze  
Of Thy High Heaven. Here in this worldly maze,  
Where few friends are and mighty is the foe,  
We wander, looking upward to Thy Heaven,  
Sinning and sinned against from day to day,  
Soul-sick, mind-tossed, and sometimes from Thee driven,  
Yet not by Thee permitted far to stray.  
Ah the blest joy when we, from all sin shriven,  
O Soul of Christ, shall be with Thee for aye!*



*PART THE FIRST.*



*PART THE FIRST.*

I.—i.

I believe in nothing whatever, for life is a sham  
and a lie,—

Life with its wonderful shiftings and ceaseless  
changes of scene,

Which has come to me unasked, and is passing  
me quickly by,

So quickly that soon 'twill have gone altogether,  
and I shall have been.

## ii.

And I know not if 'tis worth living, but live it I  
will and must,  
Where it will lead to I know not, nor care, but  
one thing I know,—  
There is no such thing as a God, be He cruel  
and faithless, or just ;  
Nor is there eternal gladness or never-ending  
woe.

## iii.

A God? O mad, fond blindness, that men should  
be such fools  
As to dream of something better than what  
themselves they are !  
Away with all their precepts and the learning of  
their schools,  
And their dogmatised theology imported from  
afar !



iv.

Gods and religions and systems—there must be  
a thousand or more,  
If each God-believing sect is, as it thinks it is,  
quite in the right :  
List to them now, just listen, how they bellow  
and wrangle and roar,  
And keep up their wordy mouthings through day  
and through eve and through night !

v.

Which of them has it ? Why, none ; they are all  
of them liars and knaves,  
All preaching and praying for gold, and  
hugging themselves in fear  
Of their lucre slipping away, ah, yes, they are  
thorough slaves  
To their own base motives—keep off them, and  
go not near.

## vi.

For their fever is highly infectious and might  
seize one. But which of the lot  
Should one take as a prophet where each thinks  
the other is wrong ?  
For one says his is the true faith, and another  
bawls out it is not,  
And the noise is more than confusing, yet  
somehow they all jog along.

## vii.

And Papist elbows Protestant, and shows him  
the stake and the fire,  
And grinds in his unwilling ears a babble of  
barbarous words,  
And moving his puppet-like flocks by some  
invisible wire  
He sets them to wipe out sin by means of armies  
and swords.

viii.

And one, like a clown in a circus, tricks him out  
with dresses and gauds,

And lights his candles before him and offers up  
the Host,

While another preaches him down with blatant  
hurrying words :

And two more wrangle yonder about the Holy  
Ghost.

ix.

And one says Christ was God, and another says  
Nay, 'tis not so.

And a creature there says the Spirit came both  
from Father and Son,

While his neighbour laughs him to scorn, as  
though he himself should know,

And tells him with show of learning that It only  
proceeded from One.

## x.

And each is wrangling and wrangling, and  
struggling along in the fight  
Of sects and systems and churches, and tells you,  
with countenance bold,  
That he, as others are wrong, is surely in the  
right,  
And that there only is one Shepherd, and that  
He has but one fold !

• II.—i.

No, I will have no dealing with these :  
They may wear out their horny knees  
Ere ever I pray to their God to help me !  
How can a God that is served in so many ways  
Be worthy of praise ?  
That I cannot see.

They would doubtless tell me a so-called truth  
Out of that strange old book  
Their Bible, in which I never look  
Except to read a simple story  
Which to me is posset of a wondrous glory,  
And which is contained in the Book of Ruth.

## ii.

For I remember well, too well,  
How my mother was wont to tell,  
Long years since in the happy hours  
Of childhood, how amidst the flowers  
And golden stubble, beneath the bright  
Eastern skies with their burning light,  
Ruth went gleaning in Boaz' sight.  
I remember, as though 'twere yesterday,  
When my sister and I were tired of play,  
How she would call us to her knee

---

And tell us of Ruth, and bid us be  
Like her, obedient, good, and kind.

And now she is dead, and lies enshrined  
Down there in the aisle of the little church,  
Where she used to make such wondrous  
search

After this God that they preach of and pray to.  
For she went and prayed there thrice a day.  
If any-one knows it, she knew the way to  
The heaven one hears of once in a way.

iii.

And when I was a child I used to go  
With her to the little church below  
In the valley, and listen to what was said  
By the surpliced and stoled one overhead,  
Who was High in his doctrine, and preached  
ex tempore,

And said he could show us the way to glory,  
Though he ended by nearly going to jail.  
For he and his Bishop could never get on,  
And the Parson would have six candles upon  
His Holy Altar, and thurify it  
With Incense, perhaps to purify it ;  
And his reading ended with a wail  
Of intonation ; his singing choir,  
Who sang while he took time to respire,  
Were clothed in short bed-gowns white as  
snow,  
With a long, black, high-necked garment below,  
While he himself was wrapped and covered  
In Albes and Copes. He scraped and bowed  
When he stood at the Altar, as though there  
hovered  
Some wonderful being in the Incense-cloud.



And he wouldn't say some of the prayers aloud.  
And he preached Real Presence, and called  
Confession

A Means of Grace, and said that when death  
Took away from the body its life and breath,  
The soul didn't go straight off to Heaven,  
But was helped to get there by Intercession.  
And news of this to the Bishop was given,  
Who, being Low Church, and prosy, and old,  
And thoroughly Protestant, very soon told  
This zealous priest, his Christian brother  
Most dearly beloved, to seek out another  
Sphere of work, or to drop such preaching,  
For he would have no Catholic teaching  
Nor Catholic service within his realm.  
But this didn't seem to overwhelm  
The parson, whose people defended him,

Till at length the Bishop, in sorrow and tears,  
Gave him a holiday for three years,  
Or, in other words, suspended him.

Yet it did no good his being away,  
For his curates did things the very same way,  
Maybe adding some details more  
In the matter of dresses and candles,—and when  
The parson came back to his church again,  
All went on as it did before.

iv.

But, as an outsider, I never could see  
What sort of a system that might be  
Which gave one man, who, as I knew,  
Was a very worldly old being, the power  
To tell another who was as true  
And courteous a one, though spoiled by the blind

Belief in a God which lived in his mind,—  
That he only should preach when he, his Lord  
In spiritual power, should give him the word.  
But of course it was one of these Christians' laws  
Of brotherly love. I remember now  
How the Bishop and Parson once had a row  
Of wordy argument, all because  
The latter would preach in a coloured stole,—  
Now, what could that have to do with the soul ?

## III.

Well, let them wrangle and fight,  
Their God and they can make it up at last.  
I will have none of them, for I know  
When they say there is God that it is not so.  
The days of God and Religion are past !  
The world is waking all over to own the great  
being, Man !

Is Man a thing so weak and slight  
As to have to trust on a God which he cannot  
see ?

I would sooner the whole race ran  
And pressed its native earth with bended knee  
To a god of wood, or copper, or stone,  
Than that it should trust on a God which it saw  
by faith alone.

## IV.—i.

Gods were well enough in the days of primeval  
earth,  
They fitted in with the customs and suited the  
savage times,  
For they sacrificed babes to them then, which  
had only just known birth,  
In the hope that the blood-loving being would  
smile on their murderous climes.

ii.

We are nothing better now, for men trust what  
they do not see,  
And look to another world when they shall have  
lost their breath  
And taken their leave of this one ; so think they,  
but as for me,  
I know there is no Hereafter, and that Death is  
an endless Death.

iii.

Heaven and Hell ? There is neither, and there  
certainly is no God  
To will man away to either. Ah, well, let them  
rest in their faith  
In this wondrously mixed-up Something that  
could damn them with a nod,  
This God and his religion of phantom and of  
wraith !

## iv.

I will have none of either, I believe in nothing  
at all,

I look on all that is with a quite indifferent  
mind ;

I hate all priestcraft and praying as though they  
were bitterest gall ;

I am a law to myself in myself, and I throw all  
else to the wind.



## V.—i.

I dreamt last night my mother came and said  
That I should not be happy while I kept  
These dark dim notions in my head :  
And then she went, and, when again I slept,  
My sister, golden-haired and azure-eyed,  
Who died at ten, came to my side  
Dressed in pure white and crowned with stars

Of perfect light, and bade me see  
What there was kept in store for me.  
She passed away : I woke. Between  
The oriel window's oaken bars,  
The moon looked in with calm, clear light,  
And lit the spot where they had been ;  
And lying sleepless through the night,  
I wondered what it all might mean.

ii.

I cannot forget that dream,  
Why did my mother and sister come, and from  
where?

Can it be that there,  
Wherever they are, they can see  
What is happening to me?

Howe'er it is so it would seem.  
But then, fool that I am,—it is matter for  
laughter,—

How can they know who are dead when there is  
no hereafter.

## VI.—i.

'Tis not a pleasant thing to live all alone  
With only a dog for one's mate,  
It turns a man to a sort of thinking stone,  
And makes him dull in his mood,  
And apt to think and to brood  
Over the special sorrows which are his own.  
I would that to be such a man it had not been  
my fate.

ii.

I live all alone in the still old castle here,  
With lands about me pleasant to see,  
And yet not pleasant to me,  
Who have nothing whatever upon the earth  
To please me, and who from very birth  
Have been accustomed to mock and sneer  
At all creation and aught of worth.

iii.

Why don't I live as my father before me did ?  
Shoot, and hunt, and gamble, and take a wife,  
And drink at night, and do, as brute instincts  
bid,  
And break my neck at last and get out of life

In a hurry. Nay, rather than be such a one  
I would follow my mother's plan, and be a saint,  
Go thrice a-day to church, and fast in Lent,  
And pray till my back were bent,  
And live like the poor mad fools that used to run  
Over hot plough-shares without complaint.

## VII.

Yet rather than be as either, for each ran on to  
extremes,

I would be as the little sister who died when she  
was ten,

Who comes to me so often in my troubled  
midnight dreams,

And makes me long to have her to live with me  
here again.

## VIII.

I have no cause to be sad,  
I have all that can please the heart,  
Horses and hounds and money and land,  
And all that is good to see,  
And yet I am never glad,  
But feel as though the brand  
Of despair were stamped on the part  
Where I fancy my brain to be.



## IX.—i.

I have just been down to the village in the dusk  
of the dying day,  
And heard a labourer talking of me at his  
cottage door,  
And without a thought of mischief, I listened  
to what he might say,  
Hearing no good of myself, as a fool could have  
told me before.

## ii.

"I be puzzled with Squire, I be ; he be naught  
of a man, sure-ly ;  
Don't believe in a God or a Heaven, nor even  
a Hell !  
And says there 'baint no more o' you arter you  
die,  
But he aint convinced me it's right, and I don't  
think he's convinced hissel.

## iii.

"For he allus looks moody, does Squire,  
a-poking and podging about,  
And reading big books all day, and watching  
the stars o' nights ;  
With his face an' hands as smooth and white  
as a new-washed clout,  
And his eyes as burning and bright as the  
Parson's altar lights.

iv.

“Parson and Squire don’t mix, as it isn’t likely  
they should

When one on ’em says there’s a God, and the  
other ’un says there baint.

An’ it allus comes out in th’ nursin’ what’s been  
grafted i’ th’ blood,

And we all on us knows that old Squire were  
not by no means a saint!

v.

“I don’t ’old noways wi’ Parson, wi’ his dresses  
and candles and smells,

Tho’ I weänt say he doesn’t do good, for he’s  
powerful kind to the poor.

But I doont agree with his sarvice, and his  
singin’ that’s like dogs’ yells,

An’ me and my missus is members at the  
Methodis’ Chapel next door.

vi.

“ And Pogson he preached last night 'bout 'ternal  
· life and death,

As' he spoke of the fearful torments that summun  
would undergo

As didn't believe in a God ; and Sister Snigsby,  
she saith

That Pogson meant the Squoire, as she 'appened  
pertikler to know !”

X.

Nine years ago to-day  
I saw them lay her body in the earth—  
My little sister, who from birth  
Was ever with me in work or play.  
Nine years ago, nine years to-day.  
How fair she looked, her face did seem  
As though she lay but in a dream,  
Yet she was dead and gone. Gone where?

Can it be true that something is there  
In the hereafter whereof she  
Has solved the eternal mystery,  
And that a halo of heavenly grace  
Circles around her golden head ?  
I do not like to think her dead  
For ever, for her calm still face  
Wore a bright smile which seemed to say  
That life was not all taken away,  
That she was not of all bereft,  
But that an inner life was left  
And gone to some more perfect day.

XI.

I am half in doubt of my creed.  
Life is worth living indeed,  
If it but the prelude is  
To some state of rest and bliss,  
But if there is nothing to come after death,  
If there be no other life than this,  
I begin to think it were best to have done with  
    breath.

## XII.

I know not where I came across this doubt  
That haunts me, mocking at my Godless faith,  
And whispering that my creed is but a wraith  
Of miserable phantoms, devil-sown,  
Breeding sad thought and endless misery,  
And likening it to one prolonged groan.  
But where or whatever it be  
I will somehow fathom it out.



XIII.—i.

I am more and more opprest  
With doubts and wonders and fears,  
And I went last night to a chest  
Which I have not opened for years,  
And, not without some tears,  
Took from its dust-covered rest  
A little Testament bound in red,  
Which belonged to my sister who is dead.

And all through the night in the gloom  
Of what was once her room,  
I sat with a single light, and read  
Of the Life of Him Who is called the Church's  
    Head,  
And of His Death and Doom.

## ii.

And, believing nothing, I still could see  
Something within this history  
That looked like Truth even unto me ;  
Till I began to wonder and wonder  
However so strange a mystery  
As a God who was One, and One in Three,  
And who was always and ever asunder,  
And yet One Person, could anyway be.

XIV.

I am thoroughly wretched and sad.  
Is the creed I have clung to wrong ?  
Is there a God, is there another world ?  
Is there a Heaven ? Is there a Hell,  
Where the damned will be suddenly hurled  
To live in fire for long  
Years of fierce torment ? Ah, well,  
If I do not somehow these doubts dispel  
I shall go mad !

## XV.—i.

Ah, tell me, some one, tell me if it all be a sham  
and a lie,  
This thing that is borne upon me by some  
invisible power,  
Which steals on my heart and my brain when  
no other being is nigh,  
Watching for ever by me and whispering, 'every  
hour,

ii.

With cruel insidious tongue, strange fancies  
which make me afraid,  
Fancies that tell me my life has been nothing  
but sorrow and sin,  
Spent in the dark, dread presence of a devil  
that casts a deep shade  
Over the life of all to whom he enters in.

iii.

I am in shadow enough, no doubt, but where is  
the light?  
Where is the star of hope? Where is the sun  
for my day?  
Where is the one that shall guide me out of  
this awful night  
Where I roam with never a being to whom I  
can look or pray?

## iv.

Is there nothing in life to live for, nothing to do  
or to be ?

Must I always be steeped in these fancies,  
always tormented with fear ?

Is there none in this vast world to come and be  
with me,

Who would bear with my sin and my sorrow,  
and hold me a little dear ?

XVI.

O lost in the black abysses of this damnèd dark  
despair,  
Where shall my heart find rest, tell me, O tell  
me, where ?





*PART THE SECOND.*



*PART THE SECOND.*

I.—i.

I have found my rest.

The shapeless phantoms of my fevered brain

Are gone, are past, are vanished into night.

O heart, rejoice ; they will not come again !

The future lies before thee, clear and white,

The future, filled with happy, happy light,

The future, a bright island of the blest.

## ii.

I have found my rest.

The doubts that dwelt within my mind of yore  
Are fled far off to some black gulf of hell.

O mind, rejoice ; they will not haunt thee more !

The future lies before thee, promising well,

Like some long stream whose course no man  
can tell,

But which looks fair to him that takes the quest.

## iii.

I have found my rest.

The night is gone, the clouds are passed away,

And there is risen above my head the star

Of Love, dear Love, who took me from the fray

To battle for him in his own sweet war

Of whispered words and glances that words are,

Wise Love, who knows that Love for man is  
best.

iv.

I have found my rest.  
The arms of Love are round me evermore,  
The voice of Love is in my ear alway.  
O golden sun, that from the eastern shore  
Castest a path of light across the bay,  
Rise higher, higher! Is not this the day  
When I shall take my love unto my breast?

v.

I have found my rest.  
O sun-lit morning, look upon her now!  
O breath of flower and foliage steal to her!  
O sunlight, touch the blossoms on her brow,  
O Love, be with her wheresoe'er she stir!  
For she is all thine own, thy minister,  
Whom thou with thine own loveliness hast  
blest.

## vi.

I have found my rest.

O bridal day, be glad, be fair, be bright!

O time, fly on with love's untrammelled feet

Through happy day to happier, happier night,

And bring me to my own, my love, my sweet,

That all our being in one long kiss may meet,

And I may hear her maiden love confest.

II.—i.

As one that wanders cheerless and forlorn  
Through darkened paths ere yet the sun be  
    risen :

As one who lies within some loathsome prison  
Watching with hungry eyes for signs of morn :  
Even as either sees at length the dawn  
And cries aloud, clapping his hands in glee,  
So did I look for, so do I look on thee.

## ii.

As one that drifts across a harbour bar,--  
Going out unhelmed beneath the hurrying  
breeze :

As one who wanders amid unknown seas  
Uncompassed, where all manners of peril are :  
Even as either sees at last a star  
Shine from the heavens with friendly brilliancy,  
So did I look for, so do I look on thee.



III.—i.

O best of All,  
O mighty influence that canst never die,  
O strange sweet passion, as the summer sky  
Cloudless and pure ! Whatever men thee call  
Still art thou, Love, the same.  
What though we know not thee, nor even thy  
name,  
We feel thy might, thy mystery, and we

Turn from ourselves to thee,  
O Love, the power that shalt for ever be !

## ii.

We know not what thou art :  
And yet we know that thou art Lord and King  
Of all that dwells within the human heart.  
O pleasant time, O gladness of the spring,  
When thou, O Love, with quick, invisible wing,  
Lit on my brow and said to care, Depart,  
And be at peace : and thou, rest from the smart  
Of loveliness ; henceforward thou art mine,  
Mine ever, mine alone.

O Love Divine,  
O springtime, O sweet madness of the earth,  
To wake to love is as a new, bright birth !  
Is this the world that once I thought so dark ?

Is this the sky which once I found so drear ?  
Are these the woods I cared not for ? But hark,  
Bells, from the village belfry old and grey,  
Fling happy sound across the wooded park,  
Startling the deer that wander there away,  
Waking the echoes of the ruins here,  
And telling me it is my marriage day.  
White day of all the whitest days of spring !  
O happy bells, ring on, for ever ring,  
It is my marriage day !

## IV.

White day of all the whitest days of spring,  
Best day of all that I have looked upon,  
Why should I wish that thou from me wert  
gone,  
But that the night is nigh ? Ah, day, take wing,  
And eve, draw near, and bring the stars with  
thee  
From watching o'er the ocean's murmuring,

And bid them shine upon my bride and me.  
Bid them watch o'er us whom Love hath  
ordained

To Love's own service. Dost thou linger, Day ?  
Nay, linger not, we would not have thee stay,  
Fly thou and leave us to our own delight :  
Love, being blind, hath never need of light :  
Go now, but come when the moon's beams have  
waned,

Come then, attended by the sweet spring dawn  
And call us back from Love's first ecstasy  
Into the blushing presence of the morn ;  
But now, O Day, go by, and let us be !

## V.

Here is a song which I have made for you,—

Where the still sunlit garden reposes,  
Shut in from the rest of the land  
By woods and by streams and by closes,  
Which stretch to the wave-washed strand  
Of shingle and rock and brown-sand,  
In front of the white-breasted sea,  
There are thousands and thousands of roses,  
But never a rose like Thee!

---

I have read in some old eastern story,  
Some legend of long, long ago,  
Of a flower that was clothed with all glory,  
A flower that had petals like snow :  
And the flower of the legend I know  
Was fair as a fair flower can be ;  
But no flower of legend or story  
Is like unto Thee !

## VI.—i.

A light on the cliffs by the sea?—

Nay, it is only a star that peeps over the hill,

A star that came out from the heavens of its  
own sweet will,

And is wandering slowly across the deserted  
shore

To gaze for awhile on thee,

And to see itself eclipsed and its brightness  
made poor

By the light of the eyes which are brighter than  
stars to me.



ii.

That are brighter than stars to me !  
There is no light like the light of the eyes that  
    I love ;  
Not all the stars that are there in the heaven  
    above,  
Not all the myriad lights that glimmer and  
    glance on the sea,  
Are bright as the eyes which will smile upon  
    mine alway ;  
Not even the cloudless skies of a sunny day  
Are bright as the dear blue eyes which shall be  
My stars for ever and aye.

iii.

My stars for ever and aye.  
Love that is mighty and true hath said they  
    shall be,  
Love that is Lord over all hath made his decree,

And bade me to serve in his courts, not by year,  
nor by day,

But for ever and ever, and I will obey his behest.

Love, that is Lord over all, does he not know  
best

What is best for us all? So for ever and ever

I will love thee and thou shalt love me, and we  
two shall part never !

## VII.—i.

What if the world should not go on for ever,  
What though there be no other life than this,  
What if the grave be our sole end and aim ?  
Even then our life of love will be the same.  
That shall not spoil our three-days-wedded bliss.  
Ah, little one, why will you thus endeavour  
To show me that I am indeed to blame  
In daring to deny your God, why wonder

That I believe in nothing, and why ponder,  
O sweetest preacher, with those downcast eyes,  
On the stern fact that I, who am so wise  
In your opinion, should refuse to see  
That there is aught amiss or wrong in me,  
Because I do not choose the creed to say,  
Because I will not kneel down twice a day  
As you in your sweet innocent whiteness do?  
Well, never mind.—See, I will pray to you,  
And you shall grant me everything I ask,  
And bid me do whate'er you wish ; the task  
Will be sweet Love's, and He is now my God.  
Am I not ready to obey each nod,  
Each rule of His? He is the God for me,  
You his High-Priest!

## ii.

You would not have me be

Like the old parson in our church at home ?  
Why, Pogson, at the chapel, says that he,  
With his fine dress and endless mummary,  
Is half, or more than half, a child of Rome !  
Let's hope she's a good mother, and that she  
Will own this child that's half hers, and half—  
whose ?

What do you say ? You would not like to lose  
The dear old father ? Well, for aught I care,  
The reverend sir can stop for ever there ;  
And you can go and pray with him, you know,  
As many times as e'er you care to go,  
And see what Pogson calls his mummary  
All Sunday through, and I will wait outside  
Till Holy Church has finished with my bride,  
And she can come and give an hour to me,  
Who love her more for all this innocence,  
This pretty care, this sanctity intense,

And would not have her that which I must be.  
No, darling, keep your faith. What do you say?  
That you will never cease to watch and pray  
For me as well, that I may come to see  
How good God is? My sweet one, watch away;  
If He is half as good as you, why then  
He is ten thousand times too good for men.  
I should not say such things? Ah, but you  
    know,  
I think you perfect, and I shall say so!

## VIII.—i.

Ah, let me never wake  
If this be but a dream,  
If this sweet hand which in my own I take  
Be not what it seem,  
If the clear lovelit gleam  
Of those dear eyes be but a fancy, brought  
From out a fevered brain,  
From out a mind o'erwrought,  
Let me not wake, let me not live again !

## ii.

Let me sleep on for aye.

Yes, let me dream that I have once been loved,  
Have known for once a perfect, cloudless day  
In the dark dulness of this life, and moved  
Once through bright paths o'er which no shadow  
lay.

If this be but a sleep,

O let me sleep for ever and for ever !

O let me dream that once mine eyes did weep  
Warm tears of love and gladness, let me know,  
If but in sleep, of love the passionate flow  
And sudden joy. O, if this should be so,  
Let me wake never !



IX.

Yes, and indeed this Love of mine shall be  
A very God, a very Lord to me.  
O Thou unknown and fabled Deity,  
Whom some, by superstitious fear made blind,  
Profess to find in every breath of wind,  
In every blade of grass, in every flower,  
If Thou indeed dost live, if there is *Thee*  
In aught about me, show it me this hour !  
Show me, Thou God, if God Thou art, Thy  
power.

See how I mock Thee ! Nay, but Thou art not.  
See how I scorn Thee ! Let it not be forgot.

God ? O pale myth, Thou art not, shalt not be :  
Keep Thine own place, Man hath no need of  
Thee,

No need, no need, O fabled One !

But see,

For I would dare Thee aught whom I not know,  
If thou art God, prove it that Thou art so.

Here, stay at once, show me Thy hand, God,  
show.

Need'st Thou some means ? Then, if a God  
Thou be,

Snatch from my life what is most dear to me !

## X.

I know not if I wake or if I sleep,  
But if I sleep, I dream.—O let me wake !  
Begone ye damnèd shapes, begone, I say,  
God, if Thou be a God, cast them away !  
See, how they drag me downwards to the deep ;  
See, how they mock my agony and creep  
Into my brain and heart and life, and make  
All things another Hell. O let me die.  
Save me, O save me !

There is some one by.  
What, is it night, and do I dream? Have I  
Been sleeping long or am I ill? And why  
Do you all speak in whispers? Who is this?  
And where is—

O like a flash of light I know,  
I know it all, 'tis burnt upon my brain,  
'Tis stamped upon my heart and in my life.  
O let me die! She can not come again,  
Did I not see her dead?

O the black woe!  
Five days, but five short days of spring my wife,  
And gone.

See, she is there, is there.  
Ah, darling, take me to thee! What, you too,  
My sister, with your long, bright, golden hair

Radiant in stars—both fair as when I knew  
You both and kissed you. Let me kiss you now,  
Sister and wife.

Nay, see, upon my brow  
Sits a black devil ; touch me not, but flee !  
Ah God, I pray Thee, take my life from me !

## XI.

Ah God, from off my brain  
Take this black curse, this fierce undying pain,  
Take it away! I own Thee, Thou art God!  
God, by the might of Thy Almighty Power,  
God, by the weight of Thy chastising rod,  
God, by the prayers that seek Thee every hour,  
Why hast Thou taken all I loved from me?  
God, Thou art God, and Thou hast won. Yet  
see,  
Thou Being of Power and Pride and Cruelty,  
I own Thy sway, but I will serve Thee never.  
God, wheresoe'er Thou art, whate'er Thou be,  
I will curse Thee for ever and for ever!

XII.—i.

I am alone ; alone in a world that is but a  
fleeting show,

A world which has proved so vile that I should  
not in it linger

If I had but the pluck of a man. God ! it were  
easy to go !

Here is the very thing to do it with. The pull  
of a finger

## ii.

Would send this bit of lead through my brain  
with a smash and a crash.

How easy it were to do it and get from the  
light !

Here goes.—But when did I ever do anything  
rash ?

I will think it over once more, and besides—that  
vision last night.

## iii.

Vision of wife and mother and sister robed in  
white,

Star-crowned and carrying palms and smiling  
all on me,

And a whisper which seemed to say "In the  
land of endless light,

We are waiting, O thou whom we love, waiting  
to welcome thee !"



iv.

In the land of endless light? Where is it?  
Thou God whom I hate,  
Thou Despot that snatched away my five-days'  
bride from me,  
Dost Thou, in Thy mighty mind, which Thy  
followers teach is great,  
Know where in space or creation any such land  
may be?

## XIII.

I will go down to the church and stand by her  
grave awhile.

'Tis eighteen months to-day since she gave me  
her last sweet smile

And went to swift death ! Why went she ?

Ah wife, with the soul so white,  
I would give—what would I not give—to be  
where thou art to-night !

XIV.—i.

O'er the soft brown autumn meadows steals the  
last light of the sun,  
Falling softly, shortening quickly, telling me that  
day is done,  
Telling me that day is over, gone another day  
from me,  
O my darling, let it perish if it brings me nearer  
thee!

## ii.

Roses blossom o'er thy bosom, O my rose I see  
not now,  
Lilies white are lying o'er thee, not so white as  
- was thy brow,  
Flowers have sprung to life above thee where  
thou liest still and dead,  
With the cross which thou so lovedst standing  
silent at thy head.

## iii.

O my wife, my love, my lost one, would that  
thou wert here with me !  
Would that I might draw thee to me with the  
hand I gave to thee,  
Would that thou couldst teach me patience,  
would that thou mightst take my hand  
In thine own, and lead me onward to some far  
off mystic land

iv.

Where is never sin or sorrow, where is neither  
fear nor shame,  
Where no crowd of mortals hurries after un-  
enduring fame,  
Where the light is clear and cloudless as the  
twilight heaven above,  
Where is nought of hate or sadness, where is  
rest and peace and love.

v.

I have sinned, none knows it better, and my  
heart would fain have rest.  
O that I could clasp thee to me, hide my sorrows  
in thy breast,  
Feel thy lips upon my forehead, and thy hand  
within my own,  
And thy heart pressed close to my heart ere it  
harden into stone !

## vi.

Vain regrets! for thou hast left me. Shall I  
ever see thee more?

Wilt thou meet me when my foot falls on that  
distant unknown shore

Which is lying undiscovered, which my feet have  
never trod,

Where thy spirit is for ever? But I have no  
faith in God.

## vii.

I am proud and I would scorn Him, I would  
curse Him, I would be

Cursed and outcast for all ages if it had not  
been for thee;

But thou lovedst Him, and if He were worthy  
of such priceless love as thine

I would love Him, and would fear Him, and  
would hail Him all-divine.

viii.

Ah, my lost one, if thou hearest, keep me with  
thy strongest prayer !—

Fool, I know not what I ask for, none hath ever  
listened there.

Had a wish of man e'er echoed in those space-  
less halls on high,

Christ, the One Propitiation, would have had no  
need to die.

ix.

No, there is no use in praying, but I would that  
thou could'st hear,

That thy voice could speak in whispers, that thy  
presence could be near.

There is left in earth no comfort, there remains  
no peace for me,

Who have known a very heaven in the love that  
was of thee.

## x.

Sweet blue eyes that looked all-sweetly in sweet  
love upon my own,  
Curl-tossed head and lips like roses—these are  
from me far-off flown.  
Yonder sun will rise to-morrow, though to-night  
he leaves the sky.—  
Would there were some resurrection for the  
blessed ones that die !

## xi.

O but I am wretched truly, and my mind with  
vague unrest  
Tears my heart in myriad pieces ; would that I  
might find some rest !  
Now that thou art taken from me what have I  
to do with life ?  
Would to God that I were buried in this grave  
with thee, my wife !



xii.

O that thou couldst once more clasp me to thy  
bosom warm and white,  
Even as thine arms did clasp me at our first  
sweet bridal night,  
Even as thou then didst press me closely to thy  
woman's breast,  
Ah, no cry should then escape me as escapes me  
now for Rest !



*PART THE THIRD.*



*PART THE THIRD.*

I.—i.

I know Thee now ! Ah, let me stay for ever  
Here by Thy side, O cast me not away !  
Here let me stay, here let me make endeavour  
To kiss Thy feet, and serve Thee day by day.

ii.

I have known sin. Who is there of the living  
That e'er hath plunged to those black gulfs  
of Hell

From which Thy hand hath drawn me, All-  
Forgiving ?

Nay, there is none that can fall as I fell.

iii.

And now I know Thee. Like some wondrous  
vision

Thou, Soul of Christ, hast crept into my  
heart.

Wilt Thou not stay and save me from perdition ?

Ah, most sweet Lord, say Thou wilt not  
depart !

iv.

Here is my heart ; it is no house of glory,

It hath no roof upreared to touch the sky,

Nor window blazing with a dead saint's story,

Nor vaulted dome, nor altar rising high,

v.

Nor hath it aught of brightness in its keeping :  
It is but flesh, and it is dark with sin,  
And myriad faults within its gloom are sleeping ;  
But, O Lord Christ, wilt Thou not enter in ?

vi.

Enter, and I will bless Thy name for ever !  
I know Thee now, I, who did once blaspheme  
Thy Holy Name and swore to serve Thee never,  
Have started up affrighted from my dream,

vii.

To find Thee watching by my sore affliction,  
Was that the way by which Thou brought'st  
me home ?  
Ah, blessèd Lord, mine is most true conviction,  
Take Thou my hand, nor let me further roam.

## viii.

O how I love Thee ! I, for ever blessèd,  
Will cling to Thee and at Thy altar kneel ;  
But when wilt Thou have half thy love confessèd  
O Soul of Christ, that meltest hearts of steel ?

## ix.

I have seen all that earth can show of sorrow,  
I have known all that man can know of love,  
Kissed lips that promised kisses for to-morrow,  
Looked into eyes which shone like stars  
above,

## x.

Clasped hands which trembled with the heart's  
emotion,  
Smiled back on smiles which tender thoughts  
confest,



Whispered warm words which told of true  
devotion,  
Stood tranced from life and strained to  
woman's breast :

xi.

I have known All ; and O, how vastly higher,  
How much more wondrous is Thy love, O  
Christ,  
For those whom Thou hast snatched from out  
the fire,  
For those for whom Thyself was sacrificed !

xii.

There is no love of father or of mother,  
There is no love of maiden or of wife,  
There is no love of sister or of brother,  
There is no love that lives in any life,

## xiii.

Such as the love wherewith, O Thou All-Saving,  
Thou hast loved me who am not fit to live.  
Didst Thou not die, and, all things calmly  
braving,  
Come unto me, my black sins to forgive ?

## xiv.

O how Thou lov'st me ! Never earthly passion  
Was half so strong as is this love of Thine !  
Was ever love that loved in this sweet fashion,  
Was ever heart that woke such love in mine ?

## xv.

I will stay here, O Love and Lord, for ever,  
Kissing Thy feet and serving Thee alway ;  
I will be Thine, and wander from Thee never,  
Until the shadows pass from me away.

II.—i.

Holy Saint Francis of the face benign !

Here in thy cloister, whence the eye looks  
down

O'er vine-clad fields upon the little town

Sleeping in sunlight that seems half-divine,

Ten years have passed above this head of mine,

Ten years, sweet years, empty of sigh or  
frown.

Yea, 'tis ten years, how quickly are they  
flown !

Sweet saint, thou knowest why :—those eyes of  
thine

That look on me so calmly from thy place  
In highest Heaven, have seen my Lord and  
Love.

Yea, thou, O Holy Saint, hast seen His Face,  
Thou lookest on It now, and so dost prove  
How glorious and how perfect is the grace  
Of Him who died on earth and lives above !

## ii.

Ten years since all that was of earth went by !  
O dear Lord Christ, whom I have served ten  
years,  
Whose bleeding feet are watered with my tears,  
All those ten years Thy presence hath been nigh,  
And ah, with Thee who for my sins didst die,  
To walk through Hell itself no craven fears  
Would my soul have. Thy Hand, once  
wounded, cheers  
All them that but for Thee in grief would sigh.

Sweet Love, blest Lord, ah, bring me nearer  
Thee,

O let me clasp Thy knees, O let me gaze  
Upon those eyes that look so pityingly  
On the dim souls which lie in this world's  
maze.

O let me reach Thee that my lips may be  
Endlessly moving in Thy name and praise!

iii.

O glad spring morning that bursts forth even now  
Across this land, this sun-kissed Italy,  
How fair art thou, how gracious thou to see,  
As the red sun, rising behind the brow  
Of the white Appenines makes night sink low,  
Away in the far west. Yea, unto me,  
O happy morn, thou, in thy majesty  
Of springtime, when all flowers and blossoms  
blow,  
H

Art a fair emblem of another day  
Which cometh, white with joy and wondrous  
bright,  
Unto my soul. Ah, it is on the way,  
Hasten then, day, and reign once more,  
O night,  
And day speed on, and night speed, while I pray,  
O come, Lord Christ, and fill my soul with  
light !

III.

See here, in the Scriptorium, old and grey,  
A missal that was not made yesterday,  
Nor twenty years since, but has laid here long,  
As in a poet's fancy hides a song.  
How old it is! What thick rough edges too :  
Here's good Saint Francis in a gown of blue,  
And the Blest Virgin with the Holy Child,  
See his round eyes and little face so mild,

And Herod with his robe and crown awry,  
The grave Magicians standing calmly by,  
And Saint Veronica beside the cross,  
And good Saint John weeping his Master's loss,  
And Stephen, looking upward to the skies,  
With claspèd hands and supplicating eyes ;  
And here the children round our Saviour's  
knees,—

Would that we, brother, were as pure as these !  
Ah well, but let us read a little, too,  
And see what he, that made this missal, knew.  
See, here is written on the opening leaf

“Life is not long, sunshine and storm are brief ;  
Ye that here read, as ye to Heaven would go,  
Pray for the soul of Fra Angelico.”

Read, brother, then ; the page is open there.



“Long years ago, how long no man can tell,  
An angel from on high went down to Hell,  
And asked of one that burnt there why he fell.

“To whom the burning one in accents low,  
Weeping hot tears the while he spake, said ‘Lo  
Because quick pride within my heart did glow

“‘So fearfully that I was lifted high  
In my own mind and feared no power, I,  
Nor ever thought that God was standing by.

“‘Nor owned him Lord, but day by day waxed  
great  
In mine own strength and made me desolate,  
And in my heart kept stern and awful state.

“‘And yet fell not because of this,—for He  
Bears long and well sin 'gainst His Majesty,  
And had forgiven at one slight word from me,—

“‘But because I, in malice, once did lay  
Dark snares to make a young heart fall away  
Whose soul was white as are the buds in May,

---

“‘And, seeing this, on me God’s anger burst,  
‘*Who sins, said He, shall surely be accurst,*  
*But he that tempts is counted e’er the worst.*’

“Then wept he once again and turned to flee  
Back to his wilds of hopeless misery  
—O thou that readest, take this unto thee,

“And learn that any sin is washed away  
Sooner than his that doth a soul betray,  
Because that soul is turned from its white  
way,—

“Where it had wandered quietly and well,—  
Unto the path which leadeth on to Hell,  
Wherein the devil and his angels dwell.

"O thou that readest, dost thy memory know  
Of any sin against a soul of snow?  
God not forgets it if thou hast done so!"

Here ends it then :—

Christ, that dost hear all  
prayer,  
Who knowest all hearts, though they be not laid  
bare,  
Who seest all deeds with Thy clear-piercing eye,  
Who most art with us when we think Thee far,  
Who shinest on us as a guiding star,  
Who healest sorrow and dost cast out woe,—  
Give, we beseech Thee, from Thy Throne in  
Heaven,  
Where Thou already him from sin hast shriven,—  
Light to the soul of Fra Angelico !

## IV.—i.

Angelus sounds across the quiet meadows :

Here let me kneel and intercession make,  
Until around me fall the evening shadows,  
With her who loves us for her dear Son's sake.

## ii.

Mother of God, and Queen of highest heaven !

Ah, Mary, hear us when we ask of thee  
To pray for us for whom thy Son has striven,  
For whom He died upon the blessed Tree.

## iii.

And hearing, kneel in thy sweet solemn whiteness  
With all true saints before the Eternal Throne,  
Ah, pray for us, and let us feel the lightness  
Of perfect peace and know our fault is gone.

## iv.

Mary, thine eyes have looked upon Him dying,  
Thine arm hath held Him as a little child,  
Ah, bid Him look on us all-suppliant lying,  
O blessèd One and Virgin undefiled.

## v.

Plead with Him, Mother of the sheep that love  
Him,  
Kneel to Him, Lily of celestial fields !  
Mary, thy love is round Him and above Him,  
Thy hand can move the sceptre which He  
wields.

## vi.

O Holy Mother, see, while night comes stealing  
Over the hills that watch yon peaceful bay,  
The bell that calls us to thy praise is pealing,  
And we will praise for ever and for aye.

## vii.

Hail, Mary! Hail, Queen, Mother, Saint Most  
Glorious!

Kneeling in Heaven before Thy Monarch Son,  
Help us to come from out the fight victorious,  
Stretch forth thy hand to greet us when 'tis  
done!



V.—i.

The tapers gleam, the incense rises slowly ;  
Above the towers the stars burn faint and  
dim,  
While to Thy Name, O Saviour Christ Most  
Holy,  
Rises the solemn hymn.

ii.

Pray for the dead ! Another soul hath left us,  
Another soul hath passed through heaven's  
bright door,  
He of whose aid and love Thou hast bereft us  
Is with Thee evermore.

## iii.

Grant him, O God, eternal rest and sweetness ;  
Look on the face of Christ Thy Son, and say  
The words which give to every life complete-  
ness,—

“ Thy sins are washed away.”

## iv.

Washed out, effaced, because, O One Oblation,  
O Lamb of God, O Sacrifice for sin,  
Thou, by the might of Thy all-sure Salvation,  
Our souls from hell didst win !

VI.—i.

After long years my heart hath come anear Thee,  
Soon I shall reach Thee whom I love so well.  
O Saviour Christ, what joy to see and hear Thee,  
O Holy Lord, how sweet Thy praise to tell!

ii.

Yes, death steals nigh me. Welcome, God's  
own angel,  
Welcome, blest shadow, bearing sword or  
spear,  
Thou art to me as is a sweet evangel,  
For thou to Him that loves wilt bring me near.

## iii.

Dying, you say? Ah me, the news is glorious;  
Soon shall I see him who hath all my  
thought;  
Yes, I shall come from out the fight victorious,  
Ransomed by Him that my salvation bought.

## iv.

How can I tell you what my heart is feeling?  
How can I speak of what my soul expects?  
Listen! I hear the angelic anthem stealing,  
Or is't some song my fancy recollects?

## v.

Do they sing matins in the church below us,  
Or is it mass, or is it eventide?  
Nay, but in dying God doth often show us  
What doth await us at the other side.

vi.

Visions we have of those bright homes of glory,  
Visions of what for us is kept in store,  
Visions surpassing poet's wildest story,  
Visions that slip through heaven's half-opened  
door.

vii.

O could I tell you what doth there await me,  
O could I say what joy is there for me,  
How ye would long through this still vale to  
mate me,  
How ye would burn with zeal that sight to see !

viii.

Christ, Holy Christ, Sweet Lord and King in  
Heaven,  
Mary, Blest Mother of the Church below,

Angels and martyrs, sinners from sin shriven,  
Virgins with souls more white than new-fall'n  
snow,

## ix.

Holy St. Peter, with the keys beside thee,  
Waiting to ope the gate with eager eyes,  
Holy St. Paul, by Him that once did chide thee,  
Aid with your prayers my passage to the  
skies.

## x.

Hail, Holy Saints, fly round Him and above  
Him,  
Kneel at His feet and kiss the wounds they  
bear,  
Tell Him I come who passionately love Him,—  
Ah, shall I bear it when I see Him there?

xi.

Will it not kill me, this fierce, fond devotion ?  
Will it not make me speechless where I stand ?  
Nay, for His Love is boundless as the ocean,  
And He will clasp me in His strong right hand,

xii.

And bear me onward to the Throne before Him,  
To kneel all humbly at the feet of God.  
And then—but how shall I, a worm, adore Him ?  
How shall I dare to wait His mighty nod ?

xiii.

How shall I dare to look on God the Father ?  
How did I dare to look on God the Son ?  
Yea, but the Son shall beg His mercy, rather  
Than that my soul should faint when life is  
done.

## xiv.

Yea, He shall pray, shall plead in accents tender  
His death till God the Father shrives my soul,  
And bids me wait before Him in His splendour  
While the vast ages round Him reverent roll.

## xv.

Yea, Christ the Saviour, Christ the One Oblation,  
Hath found me pardon, and my time is past :  
O let me go to join that mighty nation,  
O let me look upon His Face at last.

\* \* \* \* \*

## xvi.

Is the mass over ? Do they bring me unction ?—  
Christ, who in sacraments to us dost give



---

All means of grace, bless this most solemn  
function,

Forgive my sins, and those of all that live.

xvii.

And now, dear Lord, my soul is coming to Thee,  
Ah, by what wondrous ways Thou ledst me  
here ;

I had no life, no heart, until I knew Thee,  
Until Thy spirit and Thy hand came near.

xviii.

Dost Thou remember ? I, on her grave lying,  
Whose love I bless Thee for from morn to  
night,

Knew nought of earth and hoped that I was  
dying,

Because my life held nothing that was bright,

## xix.

And cursing all beneath me and above me,  
Heard a still voice as of a spirit say,—  
*Christ died for thee, and He doth surely love thee,*  
*O wandering soul, that yet shall find the way.*

## xx.

And Thou dost love me! Christ, my Lord, Thy  
Spirit  
Hath brought my soul from darkness unto  
light,  
Not by my works, for they have little merit,  
But because Thou hast washed my red heart  
white.

## xxi.

Yea, Thou hast died, and Thou art daily offered;  
Thou, the New Bloodless Sacrifice, each morn

By Thy priest's hands to God the Father  
proffered,

Cleaneest the hearts of them that are forlorn.

xxii.

O that my lips could tell Thee how I love Thee !

O that my mouth could kiss Thy wounded  
side,

O that my deeds Thy servant aye could prove  
me,

O that my soul were fit to be Thy Bride !

xxiii.

I come, sweet Jesus. Yea, the fight is over !

See, there is Death equipped with shining  
sword,

His radiant vesture o'er my head doth hover,

And he is come to fetch me to my Lord.

## xxiv.

Brothers whom I have loved so long and  
dearly,

Whose souls to Christ and hearts to men  
are true,

Ye will say mass for me at morning early,

And I will pray in Heaven all day for you.

## xxv.

O the blest joy, the happiness, the glory,

O the sweet vision and the scarce-felt fear!

Ah, to be able to tell Christ my story,

Ah, to be certain that my King is near!

## xxvi.

Finished the fight and gone the strong tempta-  
tion;

The portals reached and earth far fled away:

Sure in the strength of Christ the Lord's salvation,  
Sure in the prospect of the endless day.

xxvii.

Christ! Is it Thou? Is this the hand they  
nailed,  
Is this the wound they made in Thy sweet  
side?  
Ah, but I love Thee, and I have prevailed,  
I have come cleansed across yon heaving tide.

xxviii.

Christ! O sweet eyes, O hand so soft and tender,  
O clasp so firm that bearest me above!  
O what bright bliss, what beauty and what  
splendour,  
O Christ my King, my Lord, my Life, my Love!

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR,*

READY IN JUNE,

Crown 8vo. Hand-made Paper. Cloth extra. 6s.

HEATHER AND HYACINTH.

*FIRST SERIES.*

WM. BYLES AND SONS, PRINTERS, BRADFORD.





UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



**A** 000 812 182 4

